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LETTER DATED 9 JUNE 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Please find attached herewith the report of the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission that I dispatched to Kosovo and other areas of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between 16 and 27 May 1999 (see annex).

Given the current relevance of its findings, I would be grateful if you could bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex

Report of the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission dispatched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

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I. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

1. The escalation of violence in Kosovo since late 1997 resulted in massive population displacement, numerous civilian casualties and enormous suffering for civilian populations. The humanitarian and human rights situation remains grave. With the commencement of air strikes by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in late March 1999, the Kosovo crisis gained new, unexpected proportions. The present report covers the period immediately preceding the most recent and encouraging political developments. These are taken into account in the formulation of recommendations, but not in the main body of the report which reflects the Mission's actual findings.

2. Objectives. Against this background, the Secretary-General proposed, and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia agreed, that a United Nations Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission be dispatched to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 16 to 27 May 1999.[1] The Mission was led by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Sergio Vieira de Mello. The primary objective of the Mission, as set out by the Secretary-General, was to provide an initial assessment of the emergency needs of civilian populations and of the medium-term rehabilitation requirements in the country in light of the approaching winter. While Kosovo was the principal focus of the Mission's work, the situation of the civilian populations affected by the conflict in the rest of the country was also part of the Mission's concerns. Given the short time-frame and various security and political constraints, the Mission was intended as an initial assessment of the nature and magnitude of the needs, to be followed by a more in-depth inter-agency needs assessment, as well as sectoral evaluations by relevant agencies.

3. Itinerary. The Mission covered almost 3,000 km. in 11 days, travelling to the Provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina in Serbia, as well as to other areas in the Republic of Serbia and to the Republic of Montenegro. From 17 to 20 May, the Mission visited Belgrade, the cities of Pancevo and Novi Sad, in the Serbian Province of Vojvodina, and the towns of Aleksinac, Surdulica, Cacak, Kragujevac and Nis in central and southern Serbia. From 20 to 23 May, the Mission travelled around Kosovo, visiting Pristina, Podujevo, Urosevac, Djeneral Jankovic, Kacanik, Gnjilane, Stimjle, Prizren, Djakovica, Kosovska Mitrovica and Pec, as well as several villages around these town centres. From 23 to 24 May,

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[1] Organizations and offices participating in the Mission were the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/UNHCS), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Mine Action Service in the Department of Political Affairs, the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and Save the Children Fund, representing the non-governmental organization community. A list of participants is contained in appendix I.

the Mission visited Rozaje, Podgorica and Ulcinj in the Republic of Montenegro, before returning to Belgrade, via Mount Zlatibor and Uzice, for final meetings with federal authorities on 26 May. The Mission met with a wide cross-section of Yugoslav society, including federal, republican, provincial and local authorities, among them a significant number of opposition politicians, refugees, internally displaced persons, doctors, plant managers, teachers, villagers, journalists and many ordinary citizens. Meetings were also held with members of the diplomatic corps in Belgrade, as well as with international humanitarian organizations, national non-governmental organizations and members of civil society.

4. Cooperation of government and access. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia responded promptly and positively to the Secretary-General's proposal and provided access to the country and support to the Mission, despite the state of war, especially through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zivadin Jovanovic, and his colleagues. NATO headquarters cooperated fully in ensuring the Mission's safety. The Mission travelled widely and received adequate access to Montenegro and Serbia. In Kosovo, access and freedom of movement were more than expected, but less than requested. Most importantly, the Mission had the opportunity to make random stops and unscheduled spot checks and to conduct interviews in Kosovo. The Mission acknowledged the fact that it was granted access to the Kosovo province, despite the state of war. The local government - named the "Provisional Executive Council" and presided over by Mr. Zoran Andjelkovic - was cooperative and pragmatic. Security forces, on the other hand, were less so (access was denied, inter alia, to the village of Talinovac, with returning internally displaced persons and a number of other villages and areas with presumed internally displaced person concentrations). Security concerns put forward by the Government, including those related to the safety of the Mission, were often neither understandable, nor convincing. It was pointed out repeatedly that the Mission was authorized and prepared to take risks and that denial of access to several areas gave rise to serious questions as to the fate of civilians presumed to be assembled therein. It was evident that the main decisions at the field level were not being taken by civilian authorities. The Mission attempted to access areas alleged to be under Kosovo Liberation Army influence, in order to verify the condition of internally displaced person populations. In one instance, the Mission received assurances from KLA that the visit could take place. The following day, coincidentally, both the Government and KLA, respectively, refused and strongly advised against the visit, both alleging security reasons. The area in question was Sedlare, north-west of Stimlje.

5. Despite restrictions imposed on its movements in Kosovo, the Mission was able to form what it believes is an accurate opinion on the situation prevailing in that province as well as of preceding events.

6. The Mission wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to the doctors and staff of the Belgrade Central Hospital for the exemplary emergency assistance and treatment provided to two of its members, seriously injured in a vehicle accident on 18 May 1999.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7. Magnitude of the crisis. While the conflict in Kosovo is at the core of the latest crisis in south-eastern Europe and the suffering and massive displacement of refugees and internally displaced persons from and within Kosovo have to date been its most visible consequences, numerous other factors, including the aftermath of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the impact of the long-standing pattern of abuses of human rights, the effect of years of severe sanctions and the aerial bombardment by NATO, have left the whole country and indeed the region, severely debilitated. In addition to immediate humanitarian needs of the refugees, internally displaced and other civilian populations, the socio-economic, environmental and physical toll of the conflict throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and beyond is immense and has created a new type of complex humanitarian emergency. The challenges presented by this emergency in a comparatively developed environment exceed the humanitarian purview, or for that matter, the experience and capacity of any single agency and oblige the United Nations to bring the full range of its expertise, as well as strategic partnerships with other actors, to bear. It will require, before and especially after a settlement of the Kosovo conflict is achieved, comprehensive action by the United Nations, the international financial institutions, regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and non-governmental organizations in order to address all the aspects of the crisis.

8. Kosovo. The crisis in Kosovo has resulted in the mass forced displacement and deportation of hundreds of thousands of civilians, wholesale destruction of property and means of livelihood, wanton lawlessness and violence, thousands of documented killings, countless as-yet undocumented deaths, and immeasurable human suffering. Throughout the Mission, it was made clear to Yugoslav interlocutors, at all levels, that this was at the very core of the present conflict, and hence of its solution. Today, over 850,000 Kosovo Albanians have fled the Province for neighbouring countries and into the Republic of Montenegro and several tens of thousands have gone further afield. An unknown number of Serb residents and Serb refugees temporarily resettled in Kosovo are also said to have fled to other areas of the Republic of Serbia. Refugees who have arrived in neighbouring countries have given consistent accounts of civilians being subjected to systematic and extreme human rights violations by security forces, of executions, of forced eviction from their homes, deportations, arbitrary detention, acts of sexual violence and burning of homes. Many have also reported being stripped of their identity and other documents as they left Kosovo. Within Kosovo, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands may be internally displaced. It is also estimated that the entire population remaining in the province is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Those internally displaced persons whom the Mission came across, were living in miserable conditions, often close to their homes, but fearful of return. They stated that their most pressing needs were for physical security and basic survival items and services, in that order. All the arguments put forward by officials of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Government, however plausible and legitimate, cannot explain its failure to exercise its obligation to protect its own citizens against generalized acts of violence prohibited by and punishable under international law, believed to have been largely committed by its own agents. A

sudden change of the situation on the ground, for example, the deployment of an international force and the return of Kosovo Albanian refugees and internally displaced persons - could cause the departure of Serb resident minorities from Kosovo. Every effort must be made to assure their security.

9. Country-wide problems. Throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as a result of NATO air strikes, numerous civilians have suffered injury and loss of life, while large-scale destruction of and damage to physical infrastructure and means of production has had a devastating impact on industry, employment, the environment, essential services and agriculture. Among the most vulnerable and neglected are the more than half a million Croatian and Bosnian Serb refugees from previous conflicts. Prior to the Kosovo conflict, they constituted the largest refugee population in a single European country. Their plight should not be overshadowed by the recent crisis. These refugees deserve assistance from local authorities and the international community, as well as an urgent solution to their plight. In the Republic of Montenegro, the cumulative effect of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, of the socio-economic consequences of sanctions and of Belgrade's economic, financial and political stance, have brought the economy to the brink of collapse. This has also undermined the Republic's absorptive capacity with respect to the internally displaced persons from Kosovo, who, together with refugees from the Bosnian conflict, comprise 15 per cent of its total population.

10. International response. The United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations must quickly establish a substantial presence throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, primarily in Kosovo. This is essential in order to mount a relief operation comprising protection, food assistance, health care, nutrition, emergency rehabilitation, and to carry out more detailed, sectoral assessments. In this context, the international community will require guarantees regarding free access to all areas within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, clearance of goods, mechanisms for distribution and security for agency staff, particularly radio communications. In Kosovo, such a presence must be sufficiently strong, credible and dissuasive to provide refugees and internally displaced persons the necessary confidence and security that constitute a pre-requisite for their return. The forthcoming winter will cause tremendous hardship for millions of civilians throughout the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in particular Kosovo, given the wide-scale damage to housing, infrastructure and essential services. It is imperative to ensure a coordinated approach in meeting the short-term relief and rehabilitation needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and affected vulnerable populations. Planning for medium and longer-term needs must also begin now and a smooth and equitable transition from relief to reconstruction and development activities will be essential. Neglecting the overall picture and the need for a carefully balanced regional strategy may, again, endanger the attainment of the ultimate goal, namely a new regime conducive to the overcoming of the culture of intolerance, and achieving reconciliation, cooperation, peace, security and prosperity in south-eastern Europe. Broader European and world security considerations call for such an approach.

11. The rapidly changing political environment and the current indications of a possible political solution to the latest crisis, further strengthened the

findings of the Mission and have added urgency to the implementation of its recommendations. Most importantly, if followed through, the positive political process will remove the single most daunting obstacle to wide-scale emergency relief and rehabilitation activities, by improving the overall security situation for international humanitarian protection and assistance efforts.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Regional, integrated strategy.** In order to be effective and to engender durable solutions, assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including to Kosovo, must be undertaken as an integral part of a broader, region-wide strategy, which would encompass all the countries and regions of south-eastern Europe. This strategy, whether packaged as a "Marshall Plan for the Balkans", or under any other designation, should, on the one hand, truly cover the entire region, and on the other, be coordinated with and integrated into, the overall activities of the United Nations, including its peacekeeping and peace-making efforts. The United Nations Regional Coordinator should promote such a strategy, in synergy with all actors.

- **Comprehensive international approach.** With the Kosovo crisis the world is confronted with an entirely new and complex pattern of a humanitarian emergency occurring in a comparatively developed environment, involving a multitude of actors, causes and factors, and affecting extensive geographical areas. The totality of these factors belie a situation, the remedies of which exceed the experience, knowledge and capacity of humanitarian institutions alone. It will require, before and especially after a settlement is achieved, an unprecedented, comprehensive analysis and joint effort on the part of the United Nations, regional organizations, and the non-governmental community. Piecemeal approaches or excessively cumbersome, externally imposed solutions will not do. Conditions must also be created for international financial institutions eventually to play their essential role.

- **Re-establish an international presence.** The United Nations, cooperating with intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, should urgently re-establish the necessary humanitarian and development presence in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including in Belgrade, Pristina and Podgorica, in order to mount a comprehensive relief operation and to carry out more detailed sectoral assessments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in particular in Kosovo. From the security standpoint, all United Nations organizations should be located in common premises in all three cities, but especially in Pristina, with sub-offices being opened as the security situation permits. In Kosovo a clear distinction must be made between the pre-peace and post-peace scenarios:

- A. <u>Prior to a peace settlement</u> the United Nations Kosovo office would be responsible for relief assistance in all accessible areas of the Province for gradually widening such a space, for contingency planning and for eventual implementation of operations to support the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, for

preparations for the coming winter and other emergency and rehabilitation needs.

- B. As part of a peace settlement humanitarian, short and medium-term refugee and internally displaced person reintegration and rehabilitation activities should be given the highest priority under the leadership of a single entity as an integral component of an eventual and hopefully unitary civilian implementation structure (as was, for instance, the case in Cambodia). This entity would have a clear responsibility for inclusive humanitarian coordination, interface and complementarity with a likely military peacekeeping force as well as with rehabilitation, reconstruction and development components and agencies. A small operational inter-agency planning and coordination cell with secondees from different key operational agencies should be established in advance of its actual deployment, under the lead humanitarian agency and with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Such a cell would be responsible for joint planning and for coordination and allocation of tasks among all humanitarian organizations, as well as for coordination with other civilian components and the military contingents.

- In both scenarios A and B, the legal and administrative procedures to facilitate the work of non-governmental organizations within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia need to be established. Among the priority issues will be access to all areas within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, clearance of goods, mechanisms for distribution and monitoring, and security for agency staff, including radio communications. An early and favourable resolution of the case of the three Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE) Australia staff detained by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities is urgently required and the United Nations should continue to actively seek their release.

- **Justice.** An individual and collective sense of justice is one of the pillars of reconciliation, hence of tolerance and peace. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia must be enabled, forthwith, to carry out its mandate in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and must, in particular, form part of any international presence in Kosovo from its earliest stage.

- **Human rights.** Any agreement to resolve the Kosovo crisis should provide an adequate basis for future observance of human rights and the establishment of effective human rights institutions in Kosovo and throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There must be a substantial capacity for human rights programming. This is essential in order to meet both the longer term needs of working with authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to improve national human rights capacity, as well as the immediate needs involving protection, monitoring and inquiries regarding missing persons. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia should form a part of any peacekeeping mission in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from its earliest stage.

- **Assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons.** In the context of a peace agreement, the needs of all refugees and internally displaced

persons, including those from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, must be addressed. New displacement of Serb civilians from Kosovo occur as a result of the conflict in that Province. The United Nations should consider establishing a systematic assistance programme for all refugees and internally displaced persons in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as other vulnerable members of the local population. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities accepted the Mission's proposal to dispatch an urgent inter-agency mission, including FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO and to conduct an evaluation of categories, numbers, needs and other assistance criteria. In the case of Kosovo, UNHCR would lead such a mission, the modalities of which would vary radically depending on whether a political solution is found.

- **Emergency assistance to civilians throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.** Among the most vulnerable groups in need of immediate assistance are refugees and the displaced, children, the elderly, women, the institutionalized and the unemployed. Modalities for the regular dispatch of humanitarian convoys to assist these vulnerable groups in Kosovo and in other parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as discussed with the Federal authorities, need to be defined. Until access to all areas and all vulnerable populations is permitted, alternative strategies, for example humanitarian air drops, may be required.

- **Women and children.** The impact of the conflict on children throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo, is immeasurable and urgent attention should be focused on their recovery and developmental needs. Children affected by the crisis suffer in specific ways, not least through physical and psychological trauma, loss of education and separation from their families. Evidence of acts of sexual violence being perpetrated against women and young girls is growing.[2] UNICEF should take the lead to ensure that appropriate strategies are incorporated within humanitarian assistance programmes.

- **Winterization.** Should refugees and internally displaced persons return in the coming weeks, winterization plans for them and for the non-displaced populations in Kosovo are an obvious priority. Emergency rehabilitation needs should also be addressed throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia before the coming winter, including restoration of water supply, of heating and power generation, particularly in areas where survival needs are threatened, for example hospitals and other social institutions. Also agricultural inputs, including seeds, should be provided to those able to initiate winter crops.

- **Support to Montenegro.** Immediate and direct budgetary support should be provided to Montenegro before the situation there deteriorates further. Increased humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons is also necessary, provided Federal authorities agree - as requested by the Mission - to lift the blockade on direct assistance routes.

- **A smooth transition from short-term assistance to longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction.** An integrated approach to support the reintegration of the returning and affected local populations, and the transition from relief to development must be adopted from the outset. This should be facilitated in a Kosovo peace scenario, by the mechanism suggested above. In other parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Regional Coordinator, UNDP and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) should assume responsibility for coordination and the gradual involvement of international and local agencies, bilateral donors, government and local authorities and representatives of the community and civil society. In Kosovo, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO should commence preparations for an integrated area development approach to the return and reintegration process. Major efforts must focus on the agricultural sector, as well as income generation, employment and rehabilitation.

- **Reconstruction and development.** The United Nations and its specialized agencies should seek strategic partnerships with the European Union, the Bretton Woods institutions, and other major actors, including non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors, to prepare reconstruction plans for Kosovo, as soon as possible. Reconstruction should ultimately extend to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a whole: economic, social and environmental programmes will have to be carried out to repair the damage caused by the conflict. Civil society and community relations development will require encouragement and substantive support.

- **Employment.** The conflict and the destruction of the industrial infrastructure, as a result of air strikes, have created a colossal unemployment problem, vastly expanding the number of civilians living in poverty throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in particular in Serbia. The United Nations with FAO and ILO, and other intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions, should quickly plan with the relevant local bodies major emergency employment promotion schemes to absorb these vulnerable groups as early as possible. Such projects would also reduce the likelihood of the irregular migratory floods out of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the months ahead.

- **Environment.** Given the gravity of potential environmental consequences of the conflict and NATO bombing in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and their regional ramifications, a more detailed assessment of the full extent of the environmental impact is urgently required. A fact-finding mission should be undertaken involving UNDP, ECE, UNEP and Habitat.

- **Agriculture.** FAO should take the lead in conducting agricultural sector reviews, particularly in Kosovo, and in assisting in the establishment of a sustainable food security and coordination system.

- **Health.** Health services have been disrupted due to years of sanctions, and damage to hospitals and primary health-care centres throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo. In addition, the civilian population's ability to access health services has been undermined because of damage to transport infrastructure and lack of power. Rehabilitation of hospitals and primary health-care centres (including the primary school

health-care institutions network), and provision of urgently needed supplies, are therefore high priorities. Special attention should also be paid to re-employment and training of medical staff.

- **Governance.** Developing governance programmes for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and, in particular for Kosovo in the context of a possible transitional administration is a recommended priority area for the United Nations. Projects aimed at the strengthening of macroeconomic management capacity, legislative systems, the legal framework, the judiciary, civilian police and election management capacity, along with mechanisms for political reconciliation, public administration and civil service reform, inter alia, must be explored, particularly in Kosovo, taking advantage of national human resources, experience and skills. Progress must be nurtured from within.

- **Mine action.** The presence of a large number of mines represents a severe impediment to the safe return of refugees and displaced populations to their homes. The United Nations should consider establishing a coordinated mechanism for integrated mine action as soon as possible. Landmines and unexploded ordnance will present a significant obstacle to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to Kosovo, and the normalization process. Unexploded ordnance, as a result of the NATO air campaign and possible booby-trapping by departing Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces, are also likely to require early specialized and systematic search and neutralization or destruction.

- **Small arms.** The complex issue of small arms and light weapons - including disarmament, weapons collection and destruction, registration or transfer - must be addressed in a coordinated manner, taking into account the regional dimension of the problem and with a view to the development of a sustainable peace process, with emphasis on a disarmament campaign in Kosovo.

IV. OVERVIEW OF THE CRISIS

12. Background. The current crisis in Kosovo has complex historical, political and socio-economic roots. Long-standing, systemic violations of civil, political and human rights led, in turn, to an escalating pattern of violence and retaliation. In particular, a pattern of serious human rights abuses against Kosovo Albanians has been documented by the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other independent observers since 1993.

13. By late March 1998, following an increase in the hostilities between Serbian special police and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the United Nations estimated that 20,000 persons had been internally displaced, primarily Kosovo Albanians but also Serbs and others. The period between April and June 1998 saw an increase in armed incidents that increased the number of displaced persons and triggered refugee flows into Albania. Attacks on police and others associated or sympathizing with Serbian authorities also grew, as did reported kidnappings, hostage-taking and summary executions. By 30 June 1998, UNHCR

estimated that 76,300 persons had been displaced, 52,900 within Kosovo, 13,400 into Montenegro, and 10,000 refugees into Albania. Within Kosovo, delivery of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons became increasingly difficult, given the level of violence and risks of travel.

14. Late June, July and August 1998 saw significant changes on the ground, and fierce exchanges between KLA and Serbian forces. In the face of Serbian government gains, KLA returned to isolated strikes against police, which prompted retaliation by security forces against the ethnic Albanian population. By the end of August, open fighting by KLA and retaliatory action by government security forces had reportedly led to the death of 700 civilians, the destruction of entire villages and, as UNHCR reported, the displacement of over 240,000 persons, the vast majority of whom - 170,000 - were displaced within Kosovo. There were also 20,000 internally displaced persons in other parts of Serbia, 34,000 in Montenegro, 14,000 refugees in Albania, roughly 1,000 in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and growing numbers of asylum-seekers in western European countries. August and September 1998 brought discoveries of killings, including the massacres of civilians.

15. The Holbrooke-Milosevic accord of 13 October 1998, followed by the agreements between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Government and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on one hand, and NATO on the other, brought a temporary lull in the fighting. The deployment of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission and the withdrawal of Serbian/Yugoslav forces instilled a measure of confidence that a ceasefire would hold and that political negotiations could prosper. This permitted the gradual return of some of the displaced to their homes and the implementation of a major humanitarian protection and assistance operation. At the same time, on the political front, intensive efforts were undertaken by the Contact Group and other States to bring about a political solution, culminating in the Rambouillet negotiations. Unfortunately these efforts did not reach the political settlement which had been hoped for.

16. In December 1998, fighting broke out again in Kosovo and intensified. Displacement started anew, and re-displacement accelerated. The burning of homes and destruction of villages by Serb forces, which had not occurred since September 1998, started again and KLA actions in the form of killings and disappearances, as well as attacks on police and other security forces, intensified. From January through March, the violence increased and penetrated the region's cities. Violations of the October ceasefire continued in a pattern of almost daily targeted killings, punctuated by episodes of large-scale violence involving Kosovo Albanian paramilitary forces and Serbian police, security forces, or the Yugoslav Army. One such violent outbreak, at Racak, left 45 people dead on 15/16 January 1999. Pristina erupted with café bombings, and it appeared that at least one casualty every day was found along a Kosovo roadside. By 24 March 1999, UNHCR estimated that there were some 260,000 (old and newly) displaced persons in Kosovo.

17. The Kosovo crisis entered a new phase with the commencement of NATO air strikes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999. In the first eight days, UNHCR reported that some 220,000 persons were forcibly expelled from Kosovo to Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro.

While the number of those fleeing to or displaced within Serbia was not known, it is known that displacement had occurred creating additional humanitarian needs. Today, UNHCR estimates that over 850,000 persons have fled Kosovo into neighbouring countries, and several tens of thousands have gone further afield, including to countries in Western Europe.

18. Kosovo. The humanitarian needs of the internally displaced and other civilians remaining in Kosovo are urgent and immense, with food and the provision of primary health care as the major priorities. internally displaced persons interviewed gave accounts which corroborated those given by refugees in neighbouring countries and by displaced civilians in Montenegro: all spoke of being driven from their homes by various means of pressure, ranging from direct eviction by masked, armed groups or Yugoslav military and police, to shelling and burning of their villages by Yugoslav military. The Mission witnessed burning houses, and met with columns of internally displaced persons leaving or returning to their villages in tractors and on foot, in what appeared to be involuntary movements organized by official authorities. The damage caused to towns and villages was very disturbing, with houses, apartments and shops belonging to Kosovar Albanians having been systematically burned and/or looted. Members of the Mission who had been present in Kosovo earlier in 1999 were of the view that the destruction of Albanian properties since that time had been extensive and widespread. Along with the re-establishment of adequate conditions of security, this reconstruction and rehabilitation task will present a major challenge to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The damage witnessed, taken together with the testimony of internally displaced persons and refugees interviewed, indicated to the Mission that unjustifiable and deliberate force, far exceeding legitimate counter-insurgency measures has been and continues to be used by the Yugoslav security forces against the civilian Albanian population in Kosovo.

19. Overall situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The conflict in Kosovo and the NATO air campaign have significantly debilitated the fragile and precarious socio-economic state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had already been weakened by the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, previous conflicts and sanctions. In addition to the human costs of the conflict, evidenced notably by numerous civilian casualties, the destruction of major industries by the air bombardment, as well as damage caused to infrastructure and essential services such as water and electricity supply, health services, education, communications, heating, the damage to land and river transportation links and the loss of trade, have caused tremendous economic and social hardship for the civilian populations. Large numbers of persons, especially in densely populated centres of Vojvodina and southern Serbia where the air strikes have been particularly intensive, are reported to have moved to seek shelter in what are perceived to be "safe" locations outside cities. Children, in particular, are being sent away from their parents and have not resumed the school year since the start of the NATO campaign. Severe restrictions on fuel have effectively brought civilian Serbia to a standstill, and many parts are often without electricity and water. Agricultural production, dependent as it was on inputs such as fertilizers that are no longer available, due to the destruction of some of the most important fertilizer plants, is bound to suffer in the medium term. Environmental damage following air strikes on a number of chemical plants and refineries and its possible regional effects require urgent

specialized evaluation and action. Most notably, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is now facing an unemployment rate of crisis proportions, which will likely result in increased need for humanitarian assistance to large groups of vulnerable civilians lacking adequate income or social protection.

20. Republic of Montenegro. Montenegro is suffering from socio-economic problems similar to the rest of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as a result of the recent border closures and sanctions. Montenegro has so far escaped from wide-scale NATO air strikes and the resulting heavy damage to industry, infrastructure and employment. The situation in the Republic has been made more difficult by the Federal restrictions on the entry of goods, including humanitarian assistance, into Montenegro through its port at Bar or from Croatia. This is creating an additional strain in the already tense situation of internally displaced persons from Kosovo, who, together with refugees from previous conflicts, represent 15 per cent of the total population. Montenegro's main sources of income are presently depleted while the relatively small industrial and agro-industrial sector is also facing difficulties. As a consequence, the government budget is nearly bankrupt requiring emergency financing.

21. Refugees. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continues to host the second largest refugee population of any country in Europe, with over 500,000 refugees from the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, who are living in extremely difficult conditions caused by the general economic situation and inadequate international attention and assistance. Additional assistance for this group of Serb refugees will also be required, as well as a reaffirmation of their fundamental rights to permanent solutions, equal to those of refugees from Kosovo - first and foremost repatriation, so as to avoid setting double humanitarian standards in the region. The possible early solution of the Kosovo Albanian refugee and internally displaced persons problem would create a unique opportunity to promote durable and fair solutions to other lingering humanitarian problems in the region.

22. General economic considerations. The outbreak of the conflict in Yugoslavia has added a new dimension to the already unfavourable external environment for many transition economies, worsening further their short-term economic outlook. The conflict-related economic damage already incurred is quite substantial. Neighbouring countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) have lost important markets as well as traditional supplies in Yugoslavia. The transport links to and from the south-eastern part of Europe have been severely impaired: navigation along the Danube has been paralysed by the destroyed bridges and all traffic through Yugoslavia (ground, rail and air) has been brought to a halt. The negative effects are especially strong for the international trade between western Europe, the main trading partner, and the countries locked in the Balkan region (in particular Bulgaria, Romania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): as the available alternative routes are of limited capacity, this has resulted in the interruption of important trade flows. In addition, the loss of the Danube as a waterway will have a pan-European negative impact with the costly interruption in shipments for all the riparian countries. Tourism, an important source of employment and income for the region, will again be negatively affected this summer.

23. The conflict has undoubtedly increased investors' perception of risk in the whole area surrounding the zone of the conflict and this will restrain access to international financial markets and raise borrowing costs for the affected countries, which in general are badly in need of fresh finance. The inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to this region - an important force for economic restructuring as well as balance of payments support - is also likely to be curbed. The fact is that the conflict will have a significant negative economic impact on all the countries of south-eastern Europe, most of which were already in a precarious state.

24. The above considerations reveal an entirely new and complex pattern of humanitarian emergency occurring in a comparatively developed environment, involving causes, actors and factors, and affecting geographical areas that exceed the experience, knowledge and capacity of humanitarian institutions alone. It will require, before and especially after a settlement is achieved, an unprecedented, comprehensive analysis and treatment on the part of the United Nations, the international financial institutions, regional organizations, and the non-governmental community in order to address - fairly, equitably and promptly - all its facets. Only then will south-eastern Europe stand a chance of reversing the destructive trends of the past and turning to the peaceful and prosperous future that its nations and people deserve.

25. With this prospect in mind, the United Nations will need to expand and strengthen its humanitarian and developmental presence in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is critical that the United Nations puts in place mechanisms that will bring the whole gamut of the Organization's expertise to bear on the task of the emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. While the needs are vast, the resources the United Nations can mobilize, coordinate and bring to bear will foster the kind of multidisciplinary approach on which a successful peace process depends. The United Nations should create strategic partnerships with the European Union, the Bretton Woods institutions and other major actors, including non-governmental organizations. The combined United Nations expertise must be mobilized to prepare for and coordinate a regional reconstruction and development plan. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expressed the hope that the United Nations would fully re-engage itself without delay.

26. The above findings were shared and discussed in a frank manner with Federal Ministers upon conclusion of the Mission.

V. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS OF THE MISSION

PROVINCE OF KOSOVO

General situation

27. Apart from some city centres, where there are very few people and practically no vehicles on the streets, Kosovo is a panorama of burned houses, untended farms, wandering livestock, empty villages, and looted shops. In addition to government officials, the Mission interviewed internally displaced persons, representatives of many ethnic groups, different political parties, and

residents who have remained in their homes. Their accounts were all consistent that, in the parts of Kosovo visited by the Mission, the period from 24 March to 10 April was a rampage of killing, burning, looting, forced expulsion, violence, vendetta and terror. After the first 10 to 15 days of NATO attacks, the pace and intensity of developments differ from village to village. However, residents of Kosovo recounted having witnessed expulsions, burning of homes and business properties, looting, forced disappearances, and summary executions. In Pristina, local authorities moved to control the scope of the rampage after the first 10 to 15 days. Authorities acknowledged to the Mission that capital crimes have not ceased in Pristina, but that they are so far attributed to "unknown perpetrators".

28. The Mission saw widespread, systematically damaged, abandoned Albanian homes, shops and businesses in the areas of Kosovo visited. In some areas, approximately 80 per cent of the homes had been burnt. Two separate incidents of house burning witnessed by the Mission in areas where no fighting was occurring undermined official explanations that this damage had been caused in firefights between Serbian forces and KLA. In one town visited, Kosovska Mitrovica, where large sections of the town had been burnt and looted, the head of the regional government admitted that the police had cleared many ethnic Albanians out of the city to prevent their homes and shops being used by KLA. This explanation was consistent with refugee accounts. Of the towns and cities visited by the Mission, exclusive of Serb-majority villages, only Pristina and Prizren municipality appears to have been spared the wholesale destruction of property and means of livelihood of Kosovo Albanians. An early and thorough investigation must be carried out by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

29. Throughout Kosovo many thousands of ethnic Albanian families have abandoned comfortable homes, businesses or farms. The internally displaced persons whom the Mission encountered were living in appallingly miserable conditions, often close to their homes. Those interviewed told the Mission that Serb forces would not allow their return. Others claimed that they would be harmed if they returned. Anti-Albanian and pro-Serb slogans painted on buildings were evident in all areas where Albanian evacuations have occurred. With some exceptions, mosques generally remained undamaged, even in areas where there were large levels of destruction. There was evidence of soldiers occupying abandoned homes, schools and in one instance, occupying a defensive position around a mosque.

Refugees and internally displaced persons

30. **Urosevac.** On 21 May 1999, the Mission encountered and interviewed members of a group of approximately 200 Albanians in Urosevac, part of a larger group of about 1,500 persons, who had been prevented from leaving for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by local authorities at the train station. They said that they wanted to leave Kosovo owing to fear of Serbian police present in their village and the general climate of insecurity. On questioning the authorities as to why the group had been prevented from leaving, members of the Mission were told that the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had closed the border and would not allow refugees to enter. Moreover, there was no need for the group to leave as their village, Talinovac, was safe. Despite

those reassurances, the Mission's requests to visit the village were later rejected by the authorities on security grounds.

31. **Djeneral Jankovic.** The Mission also visited Djeneral Jankovic, on the border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 21 May. While 1,260 refugees were reported by UNHCR to have crossed into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 21 May, at the time of the Mission's visit, the border was deserted. The Mission saw roughly 200 tractors and wagons parked below an embankment at a cement factory metres from the border. Those typical refugee vehicles were packed with personal belongings and appeared to have been abandoned by the refugees prior to crossing the border. Questioned by the Mission as to why the refugees had not been able to take the vehicles with them, Serbian authorities claimed that this was because the border of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had been closed and when it reopened, the refugees had crossed on foot. Moreover, some of the tractors could not cross because they were not legally registered (the Mission, however, sighted registration plates on a number of the vehicles).

32. **Kacanik.** While Albanians previously made up 70 per cent of the population of Kacanik, at the time of the Mission's visit on 21 May, all of the Albanians were gone, save for four sick and elderly Albanian men who had been left behind living in the mosque. The impression was that the evacuation by the Albanians was very hasty. Livestock, family pets, valuable household possessions, personally valuable items, such as photograph albums and personal documents, were all left behind. In one apartment, a pot of tea ready to be consumed had been left on the table and fresh laundry still hung from the line on the balcony. Several Roma teenagers informed the Mission that the Albanian population had been forcibly evicted by the military and would suffer grave consequences if they returned to the village.

33. **Podujevo area.** On 22 May 1999, the Mission visited two villages near Podujevo, some 25 km north of Pristina, where internally displaced persons were reportedly located. Many clashes occurred in this area between the KLA and the military during January and February 1999. At the village of Svetlje, the Mission found a large group of internally displaced persons, to whom the Mission was able to speak in the absence of government officials. The information provided by the internally displaced persons in Sajkovac, the other village visited, mirrored that received in Svetlje. The following accounts were given:

(a) The internally displaced persons estimated that some 70,000 of the estimated 120,000 pre-bombing population in and around the area of Podujevo had left, with up to 20,000 internally displaced persons still living in the general Sajkovac area, with many more hiding in the mountains and hills surrounding Podujevo;

(b) The internally displaced persons came from the town of Podujevo and over 40 other villages in the surrounding area. The majority of those who had left had been forced by the military or police to leave their homes. Many were forced at gunpoint by masked men in military uniform. Summary executions were also reported. Most were forced to leave a few days after the NATO bombings started. Others had left due to shelling or shooting attacks on their villages;

(c) Some had wanted to go to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia but had been stopped in Pristina by police and forced to move to these villages. Others said that Kosovo was their home and that they had no intention of leaving. Most initially fled to the mountains, where they spent up to a month before deciding to try to return home. When attempting to return, the authorities moved them instead to various strategic pockets of land chosen by the military. Svetlje and Sajkovac were two such villages where the military had forced people to stay and where there appeared to be no significant KLA presence. While many wished to return home, they were prevented from doing so by the military. There was no freedom of movement outside the village. Many men of various ages were present in both villages;

(d) Internally displaced persons claimed that over the past 5 weeks, 20 people had died of illness, 5 of whom were children. There were however, no signs of malnutrition;

(e) The internally displaced persons did not think that there were any Albanians remaining in Podujevo. This appeared evident during the Mission's visit to Podujevo, although many were seen walking towards the market near the centre. Like many villages visited, many Albanian homes and businesses had been looted and destroyed. The town resembled a military garrison;

(f) Displaced persons appear to be surviving on the goodwill of the local population and by purchasing food at high prices from soldiers. They have no access to medical care, and in Sajkovac where the internally displaced persons represent seven times the local population, there are no additional facilities for water and sanitation or shelter. While the Kosovo authorities claimed to have established a huge humanitarian assistance programme for the needy, they were not able to provide any details of the programme to the Mission. All of the internally displaced persons interviewed insisted that they had not received any assistance whatsoever;

(g) The internally displaced persons estimated that they numbered between 14,000 and 18,000 and that police were sending more and more people to the villages each day. The people were housed in burnt houses, barns, sheds, schools, garages and trailers. A thin layer of straw covered with blankets provided sleeping accommodation in cramped conditions. Some 30 people were sleeping together in a room or shed in many instances;

(h) Many reported having witnessed killings by soldiers and police. Several spoke independently about a massacre which had occurred at a village called Kolic. Another pointed out a building containing the remains of three people who had been killed and burnt. The danger of mines prevented the Mission from inspecting that spot;

(i) The internally displaced persons were generally frightened and concerned about their safety and welfare. Despite their fears, most people appeared intent on returning home and expressed their belief that the majority of those outside Kosovo would do likewise, if they received protection;

(j) On the way back to Pristina, the Mission spoke to two groups of internally displaced persons heading towards Podujevo on a tractor. They

reported that they wanted to leave Kosovo but had been instructed by Serb police to go to Sajkovac.

34. A small group of displaced persons who had survived an alleged NATO air strike at Korisa also reported that they were prevented from returning to their homes by Serb police. While the Mission also visited Gnjilane (eastern Kosovo), Stimjle (south of Pristina), Djakovica, Prizren (western Kosovo) and Kosovska Mitrovica (northern Kosovo), particularly the latter four towns were mostly deserted and did not afford the opportunity to speak to more internally displaced persons. Abandoned tractors and trailers on the road between Djakovica and Prizren bore mute testimony to a recent exodus of refugees. Despite repeated requests to visit various villages where the Mission had information about large concentrations of internally displaced persons (Sedlare, Pagarusa, Petrov and Magura, situated in the contentious area of Kosovo between Pristina and Prizren/Djakovica, as well as areas north-west of Podujevo and east of Pec) the Mission was not granted permission to visit those areas. In the case of Sedlare, both KLA and the Government discouraged the Mission from attempting to enter the area.

35. **Refugees in Kosovo.** The Yugoslav Red Cross informed the Mission that most of the refugees in Kosovo (97 per cent from Croatia) had fled anew after the NATO bombardment started (UNHCR has confirmed that refugees in Kosovo had already been leaving the region owing to the uncertainty of the political situation prior to 24 March). On 23 May 1999, the Mission visited a destroyed refugee collective centre in Djakovica, which had apparently been the target of a NATO air attack. A huge crater was visible next to the collective centre, and the building itself was virtually destroyed. Four refugees were reportedly killed in the attack. The eventual return of Kosovo Albanian refugees and internally displaced persons may cause the displacement towards Serbia proper of an unpredictable number of Serbs currently residing in Kosovo.

Health

36. The impact of the conflict has seriously compounded the earlier poor public health situation in Kosovo. The provision of primary health care by the State health care services has been limited by several factors including reduced numbers of health staff (approximately 50 per cent), lack of medical supplies and equipment, interruption of immunization activities, and difficulties in access to medical services. The disintegration of the Albanian local network of the Mother Theresa Association, due to the destruction of their health posts and displacement of their volunteers, has drastically reduced the provision of basic medical services to the Albanian community. Hospitals in Kosovo are generally functioning and the overall bed occupancy rate is lower owing to the decrease in the general population, but priority is given to treatment of trauma and war related injuries. People suffering from any form of disability and residing in institutions are at the greatest risk, for example residents at Stimjle psychiatric hospital are living in appalling conditions without proper care. All institutes of public health continue to function but with a reduced staff and lack of necessary resources to perform a sustained epidemiological surveillance. No epidemics have been reported so far (although this may be due to under-reporting given the circumstances on the ground). The previous structure of coordination involving all partners in health (international and

local non-governmental organizations) co-chaired by WHO and the Institute of Public Health of Pristina has ceased to function and coordination currently is centralized at Ministerial level and recognizes only the Yugoslav Red Cross for the implementation of humanitarian relief assistance. Médecins sans Frontières Greece is the only non-governmental international agency working in Kosovo and is obliged to work through this structure.

37. There are urgent and pressing needs within the health sector both in addressing current demands and in the prevention of longer term consequences related to decreased resources and lack of access to health care. Among the most urgent needs are an inclusive structure for coordination, immediate rehabilitation of health posts and hospitals, provision of drugs and other essential items, training and support for staff and efforts to improve access, in particular in the area of maternal and child health.

Food and agriculture

38. The impact of the conflict has been particularly severe in Kosovo where agriculture accounted for over 40 per cent of the economy before the war, with more than 60 per cent of the population living in rural areas. As a result of massive displacements and/or departures of the population, destruction of farm buildings, agricultural machinery and equipment since March 1998, drastic reductions are expected in crop and livestock production, worsening the food deficit situation in the province. Other critical factors are increasingly scarce supplies of fertilizer, the decimation of livestock population and damage which is reported to large irrigation systems financed by the World Bank. Acute food shortages and nutritional problems, coupled with difficult distribution and access, are likely to affect internally displaced persons remaining in Kosovo and returning refugees and internally displaced persons.

39. Emergency and rehabilitation needs in the agriculture and farming sector will be considerable in Kosovo. Household food and nutritional surveys should be undertaken as soon as possible and restoration of the most basic productive assets, including land, livestock and farming equipment, together with emergency provision of agricultural inputs, will be crucial to the successful return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Women and children

40. In any conflict-torn society, the effect on women and children is especially painful and pernicious. In Kosovo, children have been affected on a scale ranging from disruption of schooling to witnessing killings or themselves being the victims of attacks. Some children are exposed to multiple threats; two children the Mission interviewed in Korisa had been forced from their home by police, survived the NATO air strike and are still prevented from returning to their home which they can see on a nearby hill. They receive no support and were visibly terrified as NATO planes flew overhead and bombs were heard to land nearby. In addition to providing for survival needs, immediate humanitarian assistance must include measures to support such children and their families, and to address the developmental needs of children, involving efforts to restore normality through introduction of play and recreation, and informal education.

41. Many women in Kosovo have lost everything, and now find themselves as heads of households for the first time, faced with the difficult responsibility of trying to provide food, shelter and protection for themselves and their surviving relatives. Women from rural and traditional families, many of whom have lost their male relatives, will face particular problems in reintegration. The situation of women in the overcrowded internally displaced person villages near Podujevo was of particular concern to the Mission. While it was not possible to conduct detailed interviews, when asked about the existence of sexual harassment/violence in such crowded conditions and where many men were present, one woman described the situation as "a catastrophe". A recent UNFPA report suggests that sexual violence has been systematically perpetrated against Kosovo Albanian women. This is an issue requiring further investigation. Assistance programmes will need to integrate the needs of women and children in all aspects, including post-trauma rehabilitation projects, in accordance with United Nations policies in this regard.

Mine action

42. A significant number of landmines have been laid in the province of Kosovo since early 1998. The impact of landmines and unexploded ordinances in Kosovo remains unclear because of the lack of detailed information provided to the Mission. What is clear, however, is that landmines and unexploded ordnances will present a significant obstacle to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and the normalization process, as well as the socio-economic development of the province. Irrespective of the actual level of danger, survey and clearance will need to be conducted in many areas prior to resettlement and reconstruction. Until this is done in areas where the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnances is suspected, refugees and internally displaced persons should not be encouraged to return. A coordinated mechanism for integrated mine action will need to be established as soon as possible.

43. Appropriate clauses on landmines and unexploded ordnances should be incorporated into ceasefire and peace agreements or any other agreement reached with the Yugoslav authorities. Such clauses would, for example, stipulate that the parties to the conflict are responsible for providing information (including maps) and when feasible, for clearing the mines that they have laid and must desist from using mines. With regard to clearance, responsibility may include "actual clearance" or "assistance in clearance" if this is deemed necessary and appropriate within the context of the overall peace settlement. At the very least, it will require that parties to the conflict provide immediately all relevant information on landmines laid, including minefield records and technical information on types and characteristics of mines used.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA (excluding Kosovo)

General situation

44. The Mission was shown much physical destruction and damage caused by NATO air strikes in all areas of Serbia visited. The Yugoslav Red Cross gave figures of 700 civilian deaths and 6,400 civilian injuries, with many more having lost their houses in the attacks. The Mission was unable to verify the accuracy of

these statistics. The largest number of civilians are said to have been killed or wounded in many of the cities/towns the Mission visited - Aleksinac, Surdulica, Cacak, Kragujevac, Pancevo and Nis. The overall state of the economy, closure of industries due to direct war damage or indirect consequences, such as lack of raw materials, loss of trade and damage to transportation links, has led to the growing impoverishment of the Serbian population. Damage to essential services, such as water, electricity, heating, health services, education, and transportation, have caused tremendous hardship for the civilian population. Humanitarian assistance will be required for the most vulnerable. Emergency humanitarian and medium-term rehabilitation assistance is required, especially in view of the coming winter.

Employment and migration pressures

45. Apart from physical damage, unemployment was the key problem identified in all the Serbian towns and communities visited during the Mission. The destruction of major industries and damage to essential services has resulted in the bulk of workers becoming jobless overnight. According to government information, an estimated 600,000 employees have been made redundant by damage to or complete destruction of industrial facilities. These redundancies will also have an impact on some 2 million dependants. The inability of the unemployed to meet their basic needs could trigger further hardships unless special efforts are made to address the problem quickly. While some strategies have been adopted, including paid-compulsory leave in most of the State-owned enterprises, these are inadequate to deal with the sheer scale of the unemployment crisis. The need for employment creation schemes to reduce the suffering of the unemployed, and to promote their social inclusion, requires urgent attention. Meeting this challenge in the context of economic collapse, drastically reduced labour demand, and decline in gross domestic product is a daunting task.

46. Among the relevant measures are emergency employment schemes including employment-intensive public works programmes and provision of micro-finance and other business support services for self-employment. External and other support to the social insurance system, which is currently unable to meet the regular payments of social benefits to the unemployed and pensioners, is required to reduce the growing vulnerability of the affected groups. Assistance is also needed to support survival strategies by the local people themselves, as well as institutional capacities of the trade unions, the employment exchanges and private employers to cope with the problem. There is an acute need for strengthening social dialogue and the involvement of the trade unions and employers in this process, to ensure that the labour dimensions are seriously considered.

47. Unless remedial measures are put in place, the current situation is bound to result in growing emigration pressures. As draft-aged males are not allowed to leave the country due to general mobilization, and with the current difficulties in obtaining visas for traditional countries of Yugoslav labour migration, there is a strong risk that increased numbers, particularly the young and well educated, will resort to using human traffickers in the region. There is a need to establish proper migration channels and to foresee measures to prevent and reverse the brain drain.

Refugees and internally displaced persons

48. The Yugoslav Red Cross provided the Mission members with information about internally displaced persons in Serbia. The Yugoslav Red Cross alleged that there were 1,200,000 temporarily or permanently internally displaced persons within Serbia requiring humanitarian assistance. As there was very little concrete information about the specific internally displaced person population in the towns visited by the Mission, a more systematic survey is necessary promptly to evaluate numbers and needs. The Mission agreed with the Federal authorities to dispatch an inter-agency Mission as a matter of priority to do this, in view of the coming winter.

49. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia hosts over half a million refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, which constitutes the second largest refugee population in Europe. Most are living in precarious conditions and many still depend on at least partial humanitarian assistance (e.g. food, hygiene items and heating fuel). The process of return of these refugees to Croatia is extremely slow, due to bureaucratic difficulties and problems associated with the return of property on the Croatian side. According to refugee leaders interviewed, the NATO campaign has exacerbated the refugees' precarious situation by slowing the integration of refugees into Yugoslav society, interrupting the resettlement of refugees to third countries and preventing the regular flow of humanitarian aid on which refugees depend.

50. One refugee collective centre close to the city of Novi Sad was visited by the Mission on 18 May 1999. The collective centre was illustrative of the over 500 collective accommodations throughout Serbia - precarious living conditions, overcrowded dormitories and not much of a future by way of self-sufficiency. The refugees were from Croatia, and wanted to return home as soon as possible, but could not, owing to the alleged destruction of their property. UNHCR continues to carry out repatriations and resettlement, albeit on a limited scale, since the NATO air campaign. These durable solutions are crucial and must be continued. A solution to the Kosovo Albanian refugee and internally displaced person question would provide an opportunity for also addressing the many unresolved refugee and internally displaced person problems in other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Health

51. The health-care system has faced economic difficulties as a consequence of the country's impoverishment since the beginning of the 1990s. The situation has been compounded since the NATO air strikes, with frequent power cuts and lack of fuel jeopardizing the viability of adequate treatment of life-threatening conditions in hospitals (e.g. incubators in neonatology, assisted respiration, intensive care unit monitoring equipment, etc.). Damage to the chemical industry has left the domestic pharmaceutical producers without basic raw materials, resulting in shortages of essential drugs. The destruction of public water supply systems in major urban areas has increased the risk of waterborne diseases. It also has had an impact on the overall hygiene conditions in health institutions, particularly in maternity departments. A comprehensive technical assessment should be carried out to assess the impact of environmental hazards on public health.

52. Preventive health-care activities, as well as curative health-care programmes have been curtailed for many reasons, including direct damage to health-care structures, destruction of the communication network, and insufficient supplies. Loss of income from health insurance resulting from unemployment will reduce funds available to the health service. According to government sources, since the beginning of the conflict with NATO, access of children and women to primary health-care services has been reduced by more than 70 per cent and access to referral institutions has been reduced by 90 per cent. Coordination is now centralized under the Federal Minister of Health.

53. Immediate support is required to rehabilitate damaged health facilities, support the capacity of hospitals to treat trauma and war injuries among the civilian population and support immunization activities by providing vaccines.

Food and agriculture

54. The conflict is increasingly taking a toll on agricultural and agro-industrial production, as well as on family food security. In the medium to long term, the agricultural sector will be operating under strained conditions, owing to the combined effects of the sanctions, damaged infrastructure and further economic deterioration. The heavy damages inflicted to power plants, road infrastructure and agro-industries by recent bombings will disrupt and significantly reduce agricultural performance in the medium and long term, both in the farm sector and food industry. In particular, destruction of the major fertilizer plants in the country is likely to result in reduced yields. In the absence of an early peaceful solution to the conflict, the population may face food shortages.

55. Rapid repair of vital infrastructure, such as power plants and major motorways and bridges will help to alleviate the situation. Means to allow imports of fertilizers, fuel and other essential agricultural inputs may be necessary following a peace agreement.

Environment

56. A large number of industrial facilities (allegedly more than 80 at the time the Mission took place) have been attacked and destroyed in the NATO air campaign. Damage to oil refineries, fuel dumps and chemical and fertilizer factories, as well as the toxic smoke from huge fires and the leakage of harmful chemicals into the soil and the water table have contributed to as yet unassessed levels of environmental pollution in some urban areas, which may in turn have a negative impact on health and ecological systems. For example, the Mission visited Pancevo, 15 km north-east of Belgrade, where the destruction of a petrochemical plant has resulted in the release of various chemical fluids (such as vinyl-chloride, chlorine, ethylene-dichloride, propylene) into the atmosphere, water and soil. This may pose a serious threat to health in the region, as well as to ecological systems in the broader Balkans and European region. Many of the compounds released in these chemical accidents can cause cancer, miscarriages and birth defects. Others are associated with fatal nerve and liver diseases. A proper scientific and technical fact-finding mission under UNEP's lead is urgently called for.

57. The pollutants which have been released could also have a negative effect in the short and long term on the nutrition chain. The lack of protective substances, as well as fertilizer, could also endanger the survival of certain plants. Land, rivers, lakes and underground waters may be polluted due to the spillage of petrochemicals, oil spills and other chemicals. The ability of the local authorities to undertake decontamination and recovery in an environmentally sound manner is hampered by shortages of material and equipment, as well as fear of further air attacks. The Mission recommended above should also assess the extent of the impact.

Women and children

58. The adverse effects of the conflict in Serbia, direct effects of the air strikes, and indirect effects as a consequence of unemployment, economic uncertainty and fears about the future, have taken a particularly heavy toll on women and children. Adolescent children were reported to be finding the situation particularly difficult - one child interviewed was visibly shaking as he described bombing which had taken place some weeks before. Education is a critical factor in restoring a sense of normality and routine for children. Disruption of all levels of education is extensive across Serbia. In most of the areas visited, children had not attended school regularly since the beginning of the air strikes as educational institutions are closed. A number of schools have been affected by so-called "collateral damage". Some kindergartens are operating for working mothers but on the whole, children do not have access to recreational facilities, play or education. It was not possible fully to assess the scale of damage to schools, but there are clearly immediate needs with regard to provision of school materials and rehabilitation of damaged buildings. In addition to restoration of regular schooling, there is a need to provide facilities such as youth centres and kindergartens, which allow children to engage in recreational activities and receive necessary psychological support. Training for staff working in such facilities should also be provided.

REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO

General situation

59. The Republic of Montenegro is suffering from socio-economic problems similar to Serbia as a result of the United Nations sanctions. Montenegro has so far escaped from wide-scale NATO air strikes and the resultant damage to industries and employment.

60. One of the major problems identified by the Mission was the blockade imposed by the federal authorities on humanitarian assistance entering Montenegro through the port of Bar or from Croatia (e.g. a large convoy of humanitarian aid including medical supplies destined for internally displaced persons had been blocked by the federal authorities for 10 days inside Montenegro). The halting of all traffic is stretching the food supply to its limits, as production in the Republic of Montenegro meets only a minimal amount of its food needs, while its population had increased by 10 per cent with the influx of internally displaced persons from Kosovo in the past few months. The

Mission requested the federal authorities to lift the restrictions, given the magnitude of the need for assistance in Montenegro.

Refugees and internally displaced persons

61. Security concerns for internally displaced persons from Kosovo created by the increasing influence of the federal military in Montenegro were one of the main problems identified by the Mission. At the time of the Mission's visit, the federal military was intervening in most matters which were previously within the sole competence of the Montenegrin police. Various security incidents between the military and internally displaced persons had occurred in Rozaje, an Albanian border community accommodating internally displaced persons, including during the Mission's visit. On 25 May 1999, the military separated and detained 73 men from a group of roughly 490 newly arriving internally displaced persons from Kosovo at the Montenegrin border, on suspicion of KLA membership. The fate of the men was of serious concern to the Mission, as in the previous weeks, the military had detained, beaten and seriously abused a similarly sized group of Kosovar male asylum-seekers. While the Montenegrin authorities have always been willing to help and intervene in such cases, their own authority has been seriously undermined by the military.

62. **Rozaje.** On 23 May 1999, the Mission visited two collective accommodations for internally displaced persons from Kosovo in Rozaje. Most of them originate from towns and villages located on or in the vicinity of the main road from Kosovska Mitrovica to Pec. The internally displaced persons' accounts of their experiences in Kosovo corroborated those given by the internally displaced persons in the Podujevo area in Kosovo. The large presence of federal military in the area has created serious security concerns for the internally displaced persons (in one incident on 8 April 1999, several internally displaced persons were killed). As a result, UNHCR has commenced moving the internally displaced persons to safer areas in Ulcinj further south.

63. **Ulcinj.** On 23 May, part of the Mission visited Ulcinj, an Albanian community in the south of Montenegro, where a number of internally displaced persons from Kosovo, who had been detained previously by the federal military when trying to transit Montenegro for Albania, were interviewed. The internally displaced persons, all men, gave an account of being separated from the women and children by the federal military at a checkpoint close to the Montenegrin-Albanian border. For three days they had been bussed around between Serbia and Kosovo before being sent back to Montenegro. While in the custody of the military, they had been robbed, beaten and some sexually abused, before being released and moved to Ulcinj.

Health

64. As in Serbia, Montenegro has had large problems in maintaining the functioning of the health-care system under the current circumstances, particularly because of difficulties in providing enough medical supplies to sustain quality primary and secondary health care. Significant levels of assistance will continue to be required from UNICEF and WHO (which are urgently providing support to the system) to keep it running.

Women and children

65. The education service has struggled to cope with the most recent influx of internally displaced persons from Kosovo. UNICEF, UNHCR and the Montenegrin authorities signed a memorandum of understanding in February 1999 on education for all displaced primary school-aged children. Under that agreement, UNICEF coordinates a non-formal education programme. It is critical that this kind of support is maintained and that services are provided to internally displaced persons which address the development needs of children.

66. As noted in the section on Kosovo, women in Montenegro face the particular challenges confronting women in conflict situations, with those confronting refugee and internally displaced person women even more acute. While the Mission was not able to conduct a detailed gender assessment, humanitarian assistance programmes throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must incorporate and mainstream gender issues in all sectors.

Employment and migration pressures

67. Montenegro's main sector for labour absorption - tourism - has been adversely affected by the conflict, with few tourists (especially those from outside the country) now visiting the region. The sector's labour force has shrunk to a mere 30 per cent of its pre-war size. The relatively small industrial sector is also facing difficulties. The reduction in tourism has further shrunk employment openings in other services and also government and community revenue for development. The high levels of unemployment and other economic hardships could trigger extensive and irregular migration and social tensions unless efforts are made to generate employment through emergency employment schemes, support for small and medium enterprise promotion, and skills retraining programmes.

Budget support

68. The Montenegrin Government, namely the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, called the Mission's urgent attention to the loss of virtually all income, bringing public coffers to the brink of bankruptcy. An appeal was made for early fiscal support from international sources.

Appendix I

Participants in the Inter-Agency Emergency Needs Assessment Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Participant	Organization
Sergio Vieira de Mello Mission leader	Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
Omar Bakhet	UNDP
Nils Kastberg	UNICEF
Ramiro Lopez da Silva	WFP
Rashid Khalikov	OCHA
David Chikvaidze Spokesperson and assistant to mission leader	United Nations Secretariat
Eduardo Arboleda	UNHCR
E. Kirsten Young	UNHCR
Bakary Kante	UNEP
Peter Schatzer	IOM
Stephane Vandam	WHO
Frank Dutton	UNHCHR
Barbara Davis	UNHCHR
Loretta Sonn	FAO
Terence Burke	United Nations Security Coordinator
Vladimir Jankola	United Nations Mine Action Service
Eugenia Date-Bah	ILO
Sarah Uppard	SCF (representing all NGOs)
Thomas Bryant	United Nations Security Officer
4 translators	Local
11 drivers	On loan from UNMIBH
Mr. Yuzi Oksamitniy	UNICEF

Appendix II

Itinerary for the United Nations Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission 16–27 May 1999

Sunday, 16 May

Cross Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Croatian border in the afternoon. Arrive Belgrade in the evening.

Monday, 17 May

08:00 Tour of damage to Belgrade
09:45 Meeting with Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policy, Yugoslav Red Cross and Serbian Commissioner for Refugees
11:30 Meeting with Ministry of Development, Science and Environment
14:30 Meetings and discussions with First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Zoran Novakovic
18:00 Press briefing by mission leader.
Overnight in Belgrade

Tuesday, 18 May

08:00 Depart for Novi Sad
08:30 Arrive Pancevo (20km from Belgrade). Visit to industrial zone (oil refinery, chemical plant)
10:30 Depart for Novi Sad via Zrenjanin
11:30 Novi Sad. Meeting with relevant authorities in Vojvodina and tour of Novi Sad – residential area, industrial zone, TV buildings, bridges
16:00 Depart for Belgrade.
Overnight in Belgrade

Wednesday, 19 May

08:00 Depart for Nis via Kragujevac, Cuprija, Aleksinac
09:30 Arrive Kragujevac. Meet with authorities
10:30 Tour of town – the "Zastava" factory, hospital, etc.
12:00 Depart for Cuprija
12:45 Tour of Cuprija
13:15 Depart for Aleksinac
14:00 Arrive Aleksinac/Tour
15:30 Depart for Nis
16:00 Arrive Nis. Talks with authorities.
17:00 Tour of town centre, market, hospital, industrial zone, tobacco factory, etc.
Overnight in Nis

Thursday, 20 May

08:00 Depart for Vranje and Surdulica. Talks with authorities
11:30 Depart for Pristina
13:00 Arrive Gnjilane
14:00 Depart Gnjilane
14:30 Arrive Pristina. Talk with authorities.
16:00 Tour of Pristina and broader area.
Overnight in Pristina

Friday, 21 May

08:00 Depart for Kosovo Polje and Obilic
09:15 Depart for Lipljan
09:30 Arrive Lipljan
10:15 Depart for Urosevac
10:45 Arrive Urosevac
11:30 Depart Urosevac
12:00 Arrive Kacanik
13:00 Depart Kacanik
13:30 Arrive Djeneral Jankovic
15:00 Depart Djeneral Jankovic
16:00 Arrive at Caglavica
17:30 Depart Caglavica
17:45 Arrive Pristina
18:00 Sectoral meetings in Pristina.
Overnight in Pristina

Saturday, 22 May

08:00 Depart for Podujevo
08:30 Arrive Podujevo
09:00 Arrive Sajkovac
11:00 Depart for Djakovica
12:30 Arrive Djakovica – *Split team into two groups*

Small group
12:30 Depart Djakovica for Prizren
13:00 Arrive Prizren
14:00 Tour of Prizren
15:00 Tour of Korisa. Speak with IDPs
16:00 Depart for Pristina
17:00 Stop in Stimlje, Muzicane. Speak with IDPs
18:30 Arrive in Pristina.
Overnight in Pristina

Large group
11:00 Depart for Pec
11:30 Arrive Pec. Sectoral meetings
14:00 Depart for Rozaje and Podgorica.
Overnight in Podgorica

Sunday, 23 May

Small group
08:00 Depart Pristina
08:45 Arrive Kosovska Mitrovica
11:30 Depart Kosovska Mitrovica
13:00 Arrive Rozaje. Speak with IDPs
17:30 Depart for Podgorica
20:00 Arrive and overnight in Podgorica – *two groups re-join*

Large group
09:00 Depart for Ulcinj
11:00 Arrive Ulcinj. Meet with authorities
13:00 Meeting with IDPs/Talks regarding adverse effects on tourist industry
15:00 Return to Podgorica
17:00 Arrive and overnight in Podgorica

Monday, 24 May

08:30 Meeting with Montenegrin authorities
10:30 Press conference by the mission leader
11:30 Depart for Mt. Zlatibor.
Overnight in Mt. Zlatibor

Tuesday, 25 May

08:00 Depart Mt. Zlatibor for Uzice and Cacak
19:00 Return to Belgrade.
Overnight in Belgrade

Wednesday, 26 May

08:00 Wrap-up sectoral meetings with Federal authorities:
- Environment/UNEP
- Reconstruction, Rehabilitation/UNDP, FAO, UNHCR
- Emergency, Humanitarian Relief/UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, OCHA
- Health/WHO, UNICEF
- Human Rights/UNHCHR
- Education/UNICEF

15:00 Wrap-up meeting with Foreign Minister Zivadin Jovanovic
18:00 Press Conference
Overnight in Belgrade.

Thursday, 27 May

06:00 Depart Belgrade for Zagreb.

Appendix III

United Nations
Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission
16 - 27 May 1999

SOURCES: UNHCR & ADC WORLDMAP, © GIS DATA

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.